

[HOME](#)



Floor Statement

Congressional Record
108th Congress
First Session

Tuesday, July 22, 2003

Canadian Harp Seal Hunt

Mr. President, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) has recently brought to my attention a matter that I want to share with my colleagues. According to this prestigious organization, the Canadian government provides millions of dollars of subsidies to the sealing industry every year. These subsidies facilitate the slaughter of innocent animals and artificially extend the life of an industry which has ceased to exist in most developed countries.

In 2001, a group of independent veterinarians traveled to observe the seal hunt. What they witnessed was shocking to all who are concerned about the humane treatment of animals. The images are difficult to envision but harder to believe: skinning of live animals and the dragging of live seals across the ice using steel hooks.

Few would argue that this industry still serves a legitimate purpose. A number of years ago, an economic analysis of the Canadian sealing industry concluded that it provided the equivalent of only 100 to 150 full-time jobs each year. In addition, the analysis found that these jobs cost Canadian taxpayers nearly \$30,000 each. The report concluded that when the cost of government subsidies provided to the industry was weighed against the landed value of the seals each year, the net value of the sealing industry was close to zero.

There is little about the Canadian sealing industry that is self-sustaining. The operating budget of the Canadian Sealers Association continues to be paid by the Canadian government; their rent each month is paid by the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador; seal processing companies continue to receive subsidies through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency; Human Resources Development Canada, and other federal funding programs for staffing and capital costs. The sealing industry, through the Sealing Industry Development Council and other bodies, receives assistance for product research and development, and for product marketing initiatives, both overseas and domestically. All the costs of the seal hunt for ice breaking services and for search and rescue, provided by the Canadian Coast Guard, are underwritten by Canadian taxpayers.

Many believe that subsidizing an industry that only operates for a few weeks a year and employs only a few hundred people on a seasonal, part-time basis is simply a bad investment on the part of the Canadian government. The HSUS has already called upon the Canadian government to end these archaic subsidies and instead work to diversify the economy in the Atlantic region by facilitating long-term jobs and livelihoods.

The clubbing of baby seals can't be defended or justified, and Canada should end it just as we ended the Alaska baby seal massacre 20 years ago.

#

[Carl's Bio](#)* [Photo Gallery](#)* [Michigan Services](#)* [Senate Activity](#)
[Press Page](#)* [Federal Links](#)* [Student Info](#)* [Contact Carl](#)